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HOME MAKERS' CHAT

Friday, November 3, 1939.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NUTS". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

The other day as I was reading some of the crop reports of the United States Department of Agriculture, I came across an item about the crop of nuts for 1939. This item about nuts caught my eye right away--because it had some good news in it--and because I have quite a collection of good nut recipes that I want to make use of this winter.

Well, from the gist of this report, it looks as though the squirrels must be having an unusually busy fall. For this seems to have been a good year for nuts over most the United States. However, I'll let you judge that for yourself--by reading you a part of the report.

This report is only for the nuts that are grown in this country in large enough quantities to make them important commercially. There are five of them--including peanuts, which are sort of in a class by themselves. These five are peanuts--English walnuts--pecans--almonds--and filberts.

"Of these, filberts--or maybe you call them hazelnuts--are expected to break all previous records for abundance. English walnuts probably will be coming to market in near-record numbers. Almonds are expected to be slightly under last year's all-time high. And pecans, though they won't be breaking records, probably will be more plentiful than they were last year.

"Peanuts are in a class by themselves--first because they do not grow on trees as do these other nuts. And second, they're grown on a much larger scale than the tree nuts. This year peanuts probably will be not quite so plentiful as they

were last year. But last year--as you may remember--the crop was exceptionally large.

And that--in a nutshell--is that for this year's crop of peanuts and English walnuts--and for pecans, almonds, and filberts.

"Shopping for nuts sometimes brings up the question--'Is it better to buy nuts in the shell--or already shelled?'"

The best answer to that question as far as I can find is "It depends".

On one hand--nuts in the shell are somewhat cheaper per pound and aren't so likely to get contaminated. On the other hand--nuts already shelled save you the time and labor it takes to get them out of the shell. And they don't take up so much room in the storage cupboard.

But however you buy them--the most important things to check are their crispness and their freshness. Most nuts are rich in fat and if this becomes rancid the nuts have a disagreeable flavor. It takes just a few of these off-flavored nuts to spoil an otherwise delicious cake--or nut bread--or candy.

To keep nuts from becoming rancid on your hands--it's a good idea to buy them in fairly small quantities and then to use them up quickly. And keep nuts in an airtight container--in a cool--dark--dry place.

And now--just a word or two about using nuts in cooking--from the Federal Bureau of Home Economics.

"Although nuts are practically made-to-order for kitchen use, there's one precaution no cook should overlook. Be sure that every bit of the shell is separated from the nut meats. For, to bite into a piece of cake or candy and come down on a bit of a shell comes definitely under the head of unpleasant surprises.

"You can add nuts to favorite recipes for breads--and muffins--and cakes--and biscuits--and waffles--and cookies without changing any of the ingredients in the recipe. Use from one-fourth to one-half cup of nuts for each cup of flour.

"For pies--and cakes--and bread--and other concoctions that have to be cooked for very long, most cooks like nuts with a fairly pronounced flavor. They like nuts with a distinctive flavor also--for ice cream. Black walnut or pistache, for instance. A good proportion of nuts to ice-cream is one-half cup of nuts to 1 quart ice-cream mixture."

"Nuts lend an interesting crispness of texture to salads. Sprinkle them over the top of the salad--mix them with the other ingredients--or serve them alongside in tiny paper cups."

And speaking of salads--here's a bit of salad wisdom I've found out for myself. That is--when you use hickory nuts--or black walnuts--or English walnuts in salads--add them just before you serve the salad. For if you put them in very long ahead of time, they may discolor the whole mixture."

And now I'm going to switch from the uses of nuts in cooking to the food value of nuts--although I realize I haven't even scratched the surface of the many delicious desserts--and bread-- and other dishes you can make with nuts.

"On the whole, it is better to include nuts as part of the regular meal--not serve them as a supplement to it. For nuts are a very concentrated food.

"Most nuts are very rich in fat. They do contain protein. But usually they should be considered as a source of fat rather than of protein. One reason for that is that in order to get a sizeable amount of protein from nuts you have to eat a lot more fat than you want ordinarily.

"And finally--checking up on the vitamin and mineral content of nuts. All of the more common nuts are good sources of vitamin E₁. Pecans are a good source of vitamin A. Most nuts are rich sources of phosphorus. And a few nuts--among them walnuts and pecans--are good sources of iron."

And those are all the notes I have on nuts today. But let me repeat the good news with which I started this broadcast. 1939 has been an unusually good year for nuts over most of the United States.

